The Dragon Flew into the Raven's Nest

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The Dragon Flew into the Raven's Nest

by balkani

Summary

Will Graham works as the Charms professor and Head of Ravenclaw House at Hogwarts. When a body of one of his students is discovered on the astronomy tower, he is launched into an investigation surrounding him and a mysterious Red Dragon. When Jack Crawford, Minister of Magic, assigns Hannibal Lecter to Will as a bodyguard, who knows what will happen?
A fanfic about magic, murder, and blooming cannibalistic romances. :)

Notes

please i'm begging i usually never finish fanfics but i REALLY want to see this one to completion bc i have so much planned for it also i hope you all enjoy this first chapter! it's a longer chapter than what i usually write, but the writer in me was inspired by listening to hogwarts ambiance music :) TW for vomiting in this chapter btw--sorry Will.

Enjoy the fic!

The First Baby Bird to Die

It was a rainy night like every other, and yet, something was twisting through the shadows. Will could feel it--it seeped into the wet stones underneath his feet as he hurried back to his office, a night stroll turned damp and cold. Of course, in a place like Hogwarts, mystery shrouded every dusty corner of the castle. He ignored the tingling sensation in his lower back and stomach as he swept through the halls, heading up to the Ravenclaw wing. His office resided near their common rooms, and he could hear the thunder rumbling above his head as he climbed higher into the towers. Finally, he passed the dormitory's door on the right and headed into his office on the left. Inside, the rain pattered against the windows as he gently closed the heavy, iron-clad door and locked it.

The fireplace was dark, the sole light being a single lamp he had left lit before heading out. Sighing, he shrugged off his outer robe and hung it on a hook near the door. His shoulders relaxed, and he tugged his wand out of his thick hiking boots. It was an aspen wand of eight inches, dragon heartstring. When Will first got his wand at Ollivanders, he knew what it wanted from him. This wand was one that was temperamental, powerful. Suited to charmwork and marital magic, it chose an owner that was strong-minded and determined, and yet could act on impulse and was not resilient to change. Will had pondered this analysis for the longest time, learning to accept that this was what his wand wanted from him. With a quick up-and-down flick of his wrist, he set the fireplace alight with a silent *Incendio,* and promptly set his wand down on his desk. He settled down into an easy chair placed next to the fireplace, of which he had been sleeping in as of late. He began unlacing his boots, fingers warming up from the cold outside, when he heard a light knock on his door. Not knowing what time it was, but assuming it was quite late, he reluctantly got up from his chair.

The person behind the door knocked again before he could open it.

"Calm down, I'm coming," he said, unlocking the large door and heaving it open. A tiny Ravenclaw first year stood there, a distraught look on his face. Will immediately could sense that something was wrong, nothing major, but something had happened.

"What is it?" he said, crouching down to his level so they would be face to face. "Did one of the fifth years break something again?"

The small first year shook his head--Will racked his brain for names. "...Charles? Do you want me to come with you?" Charles nodded and Will stood up, taking the 11-year old's hand. "Let's go check it out, ok?" Will let Charles lead him to the door of the dormitories, where Will knocked on the eagle knocker three times. It opened its bronze beak.

"You measure my life in hours, and I serve you by expiring. I'm quick when I'm thin and slow when I'm fat. Wind is my enemy. What am I?"

“A candle,” Will said quickly. The door swung open, and Will saw a decent amount of Ravenclaws standing around something on the floor. He then noticed the broken window, rain and wind rushing in. No one had bothered to fix it, which struck Will as odd. He gently moved his Ravenclaws aside to see what had crashed through the window. One of the sixth-years was crouched on the floor, holding something in their arms. Will could see it clearly--a baby thestral had thrown itself through the window. However, only a few others aside from himself seemed to be able to see it.

“Stand back,” he commanded, and they parted to let him through. He crouched down beside the sixth-year, who handed it to Will with trembling arms. He could sense how distraught they were--not only from seeing a thestral, but to have one dying in their arms. Will stood, holding the thestral gently. “Ok, everyone. I’m going to take this thestral to the Groundskeeper, while you all stay here. Someone needs to fix that window while I’m gone, ok? I’ll be back soon--keep each other safe. Especially you, seventh-years.” The seventh-years all murmured assent, and Will smiled reassuringly. “I’m sure the thestral will be ok. Keep a look out for me.”

Will left the common room promptly, only stopping by his office to grab his wand where he left it. The thestral was still breathing, albeit weakly. It was the size of a large dog, which Will had much experience handling. Carefully, he stuck his wand into his boot and made the trek outside. It was long, and he almost slipped a few times going down the six flights of stairs, but he finally made it onto the grounds. The castle was quiet, save for a few windows lit up with candles. He made the muddy walk down the steep hill to the Groundskeeper’s cottage, where he could see the windows alight from within. A few sheep slept underneath the outside awning, oblivious to the downpour happening a few feet from them. Will knocked on the door, but only once, as it was whisked open just as he went to knock it again. The Groundskeeper, Molly, ushered him inside.

“What the hell happened?” Molly asked, sweeping a few dishes off of her large dinner table so Will could place the thestral down. Molly’s cottage was rustic, cluttered, and Will felt right at home. It reminded him of his own office, and he always loved coming down here for tea. Now, the clutter was constricting. His limited movement as he placed the thestral down led to a clench of anxiety in his chest, but he ignored it. He moved out of the way as Molly examined the thestral thoroughly--she could see it too.

“Came right through the window in the common room. I had just gotten back from a walk.”

Molly hummed, deep in thought. She opened her ice box and pulled out a raw-ish steak, handing it to Will. The texture did not bode well for his anxiety, but he held on nonetheless. She went to work wrapping the thestral’s wounds with gauze and cotton, but the thestral still could not breathe. Will set the steak down on the table, and pulled out his wand. He cast *Anapneo* on the thestral’s throat, but it seemed like the thing blocking its airway would not be Vanished. Molly silently held the thestral down while Will used his wand and hands to open the thestral’s mouth, peering down it’s constricting throat. A white glint met him, and he (stupidly) reached his unprotected hand down its gaping maw. He felt for the object, grabbed it, and pulled it out with little trouble. The thestral gasped in oxygen, chest heaving. Will was

trembling, covered in sweat and a little bit of thestral blood. Molly rushed to the thestral's side while Will examined the foreign object.

"Molly, this is for the Headmistress. Will you be able to take care of him yourself?"

Molly didn't even look up, just shooed him out the door. As he rushed off, he could have sworn he heard her cuss him out for coming so late at night. He reached the side door he came out through, and when stepping in, was practically accosted by the caretaker, Abel Gideon.

"Gideon--" he started, but Gideon cut him off.

"Aha!" he said, with an air of glee. "You're coming with me, Mr. Graham."

Will struggled, but Gideon was a lot more well-rested than he was, and eventually let Gideon drag him to the headmistress's office. "I mean, I was going here anyways," he started, but Gideon stopped him again.

"To kill the headmistress? Likely story."

Now Will was confused. Kill the headmistress? Who would want to kill the headmistress?

On second thought, a lot of people. Still, he wondered why now, of all times, someone would attempt to try.

"This is your stop," Gideon said while unceremoniously throwing Will at the base of the large eagle statue that led to the headmistress's office. "Acid Pops," Gideon said at the eagle, and then left Will alone. The eagle began to move, revealing a staircase going upwards. Will was tired of stairs. He climbed them to the top, hearing voices up above. They all sounded various levels of worried, save for one voice that was disturbingly calm. Will could sense it, too. All of the people in the office (four?) save for one, were in states of distress. One person felt almost cold to him--like he'd rather be anywhere else. Will knocked on the door, one of what felt like a thousand times that evening, and it opened to the grim face of one Jack Crawford, Minister of Magic. Will suddenly became rather self conscious of the image he was projecting to his boss and also the leader of the Magic world--a bloody, sweaty, slightly mucus-y, poured-on mess of a man who probably looked as feral as they come.

"Mr. Crawford, why--?" Will looked past Crawford to see Headmistress Bloom standing behind her desk with two Aurors; a man with a pristine haircut, and a woman wearing a leather jacket standing across from her.

"Please, Mr. Graham, come in," Crawford said in a deep voice Will wasn't expecting. He timidly crossed the threshold, and Crawford shut the door behind him. Will locked eyes with the man across the room. The first thing he noticed was that he was unconventionally attractive. He had striking eyes and cheekbones, and his posture and robes screamed elegance. The second thing he noticed was that they were all staring at him, and he was just blatantly ogling some random dude he just met. He cleared his throat.

“What is this about?” he asked, putting on a brave face. “I was just practically assaulted by Gideon.”

Alana sighed, rubbing her temples. The woman to her left looked like she wanted to say something, but Crawford cut her off.

“Mr. Graham, one of your students was found dead tonight.”

Will stood there. He blinked a few times.

“Dead?”

“Dead.” Crawford repeated. “A second-year Ravenclaw’s body was found on the top of the Astronomy tower by your caretaker. We’d like you to ID the body, as well as provide a statement.”

“A statement?” Will laughed. “Am I a suspect?”

He realized how dumb that sounded. Of course he was, he was covered in blood and was wandering around outside. They all continued to stare at him, before he quickly backtracked. “Ok, I get that. Blood and all. It’s not human, though.” That earned him a quizzical look from Crawford and company, so he launched into an explanation. “A thestral--a baby one--crashed through our common room window. I wasn’t there when it happened, or maybe I was. See," he paused to swallow and take a breath. "I had been out for a walk across the grounds to practice a few Charms I wished to teach in class tomorrow. The last time I practiced indoors, I almost set my desk on fire. I went back early because it had begun to rain, and just as I had gotten back into my office and hung up my coat, a first year came to get me. His name is Charles Dougherty, and when we reached the common room, the window was broken and the thestral was on the floor. I took the thestral to Molly’s--she’s the groundskeeper and the professor for Care of Magical Creatures. There was this in its throat,”

and he showed them the slightly slimy object he had wrenched out of its mouth. It was, upon further inspection, a small scroll encased in glass. It was addressed to Alana. Will handed Crawford the scroll, and he popped it open. He then unfurled the scroll to read aloud.

“I have waited long enough in the shadows. Finally, I have gained the power to fight back. Change is coming through your school, and the Ravenclaws will only be the beginning. A Great Red Dragon has been borne, and flesh and blood spilled will feed its terrible wrath.”

Will needed to sit down. He spotted a chair a few feet away, and stumbled to it, collapsing in its arms. They all stared at him, openly. He didn’t care at this point, let them stare away.

“Will--” Alana started, but he threw up a hand to cut her off. Someone was planning on attacking all of the Ravenclaw students, and there he was, galavanting around outside with Molly and some half-dead thestral. He brought his hand to his head, and took off his glasses. He sat there, with his eyes closed, as the others in the room whispered back and forth about what to do. He felt someone come up beside him--the foreign man, from his quiet aura. The man grabbed him lightly on the shoulder, and he looked up. Upon further inspection after

putting his glasses back on, this man must have been at least ten years older than him, from the fine wrinkles and the grey here and there in his hair. Will shook his head, looking down.

“Sorry,” he said quietly, but he felt the man shake his head.

“There is no need to be sorry,” the man said in a heavily accented voice. French, maybe? No, it was too smooth for that. “This is a difficult time. I assume you must be having many different, somewhat concerning thoughts.” Will nodded, and the man helped him stand up. He didn’t recognize how tired he was until he had sat down for a minute. “What time is it?” he asked.

“Two thirty,” the man replied. Will sighed. Later than what he had assumed.

“I’d like to go look at the body, now,” he announced, and the other three wizards looked at him.

“Lecter, you take him up there. Katz will stay with me while Headmistress Bloom and I deliberate about what to do next,” Crawford ordered. The man, Lecter, (an odd name), led Will out of the office and onto the staircase.

“I presume you know where you are going?” Lecter said, and Will nodded.

“It’s not too far out of the way.” They descended the staircase and ended up in the hallway outside of the stairwell. As they walked, Will felt the need to break the silence. All that could be heard was the crackling of the castle’s torches and the rain outside.

“So, Lecter, where did you go to school? I assume not here--your accent isn’t vaguely Scottish or English.”

Lecter hummed, a rich sound. “Please, Mr. Graham, call me Hannibal. Lecter is my last name. Jack tends to order us around like that.” Hannibal said as they rounded a corner.

Will reddened. He had just assumed Lecter was his first name. His actual first name, however, was just as interesting. “Names aside,” Hannibal continued, “I went to the Koldovstoretz School of Magic. I wished to go to Durmstrang or Beauxbatons, but my parents insisted on Koldovstoretz.”

Will thought for a minute. “That’s in Russia, right?”

Hannibal smiled. “That’s correct. You must know your geography well, Mr. Graham. Not a lot of people know about Koldovstoretz.”

“The name gives it away,” Will said.

“That it does. It is very distinctly Russian.”

Will moved to open his mouth, but Hannibal was one step ahead of him.

“Before you ask, I am from Lithuania. Pure-blooded, although that does not matter. Not many witches and wizards are to be found in Lithuania, so I assume my parents must be distantly

related."

Will laughed at that, and Hannibal smiled again. They reached the staircase to the Astronomy tower, and Hannibal let Will take the lead. Will noticed how closely the Auror was following him, looking out the windows and taking carefully measured steps.

"Scared of heights?" he asked, before he could stop himself. He heard the sound of Hannibal walking stop behind him, and he turned around. Hannibal was looking out the window, an unreadable expression on his face. "Homesick?" Will asked, glancing out the window with him. He could see the Forbidden Forest in the distance, as well as a small light from Molly's cottage. He wondered if the thestral was alright.

"How did you know?" Hannibal asked, a note of rawness in his voice. Very small, but Will picked up on it. "I'm an empath," he responded. "I felt it. You probably don't think of home very often, but I guess our conversation reminded you of where you used to live."

Hannibal's face both lit up and fell, a duality Will wasn't used to seeing.

"It did," Hannibal responded simply. If Will didn't miss his guess, Hannibal had some things going on in his past that he'd rather not talk about. Will dropped it, and they moved on. Finally, they reached the top of the astronomy tower, where a few other Aurors were standing. They had conjured up ropes around the area, most likely to keep out nosy people like Gideon. They had also put up a magical barrier over the tower to prevent the rain from mucking up the crime scene even more. Smart.

"Mr. Graham, these are my associates, Brian Zeller and Jimmy Price. Zeller, Price, Mr. Graham." Hannibal gestured at the two other Aurors there. Zeller waved nonchalantly, siphoning some blood up off the stones with his wand into a small vial. Price had a scroll out, and was jotting down notes. He looked up, glancing Will up and down.

"I'm going to take a wild guess and say you're the head of Ravenclaw house?" Price said, extending a gloved hand. Will took it, and looked to the body, which was covered by a thin, white sheet. "Yeah, it's pretty rough," Price continued. "We honestly don't see stuff like this that often." Will leaned down and lifted the cloth gently from the student's head. It was a third-year. Her name is...was Alma Roberts. He set the cloth back down and stood up. "How extensive are the wounds?" he asked Price, who hummed and looked near the top of the scroll, where a body diagram was extensively labeled.

"Well," Price said, "I wouldn't have wanted to be her. She's got, as you know, both eyes missing, as well as a few missing organs. A kidney here, a heart there, ex cetera. She's been stitched back together, though. It seems like overkill, considering that wasn't the cause of death."

"What was?" Will asked, glancing at the scroll.

"Gunshot to the head. A Muggle weapon. Not surprising, since that can't be traced by magic."

“Easiest way to get away with murder, since we don’t know jack shit about Muggle weapons,” Zeller added from Will’s left.

“Yes,” Price bantered back, “if only our benevolent Minister would allow us to study Muggles, idiots that they are.”

“Hey, asshole, I’m half Muggle.”

“It shows.”

“Please, not now, the both of you,” Hannibal interrupted. “Mr. Graham here is an empath, so he may be able to offer some insight.”

That had gotten their attention. “An empath?” Zeller asked. “Can you read my mind?”

“No.” Will said. “Hannibal is right, however. I noticed that this wasn’t... *anger* , per say. It feels more like a mercy killing? I think whoever did this intended to change her, perhaps from alive to dead. It reminds me of what he said in the letter--change is coming.”

They all stood there, mulling over what the hell change meant. “Also,” Will added, “This wasn’t a second-year. This is a third-year; her name was Alma Roberts.”

Price noted that on his scroll, and suddenly Will felt extremely nauseous. He ran over to the side of the tower and promptly vomited over it, tears stinging his eyes. He felt a wave of pain hit his scapula, and cried out into the night. All he could hear was a ringing behind his ears. It hit him, just then. This murder was only the beginning. What he had felt from this kill was a rebirth.

Slumped against the side of the tower, he felt a large, warm hand on his back. His glasses were gently removed as another wave of nausea hit him, the image of the girl’s slack face burned into his eyelids. He only brought up bile this time, coughing hard. He heard voices behind him, but didn’t register who they belonged to.

Finally, the nausea stopped, and he took a deep breath. Looking around, he noticed through a haze that Price and Zeller left, and Hannibal was on the other side of the tower. “I’m sorry,” Will said for the second time that night. Hannibal dismissed it with a wave of his hand and walked over to where Will was standing, trembling.

“Here,” Hannibal said, and handed Will his glasses. Will thanked him, and they descended the tower. Will noticed that Hannibal’s hand was still on his back, and he realized that he appreciated it. Once they were out of the tower, Will stumbled over to a stone bench etched in the wall and sat down. Hannibal stayed standing, but to the side of Will’s vision.

“I hate to be the person to say this, but I believe we need to return to Headmistress Alana’s office. I understand you aren’t feeling well, but we must confer with her about what to do next.”

Will’s throat burned, but he nodded and said “I agree. I think...I think more murders are going to come.”

Hannibal's solemn face was all he needed to know. Of course there would be more. And of course it was the kids he cared about. Alma had been one of the sweetest students he'd ever met, albeit a tad lazy. Still, she was a good leader for the first-years and he envied how well she got along with the younger kids. She's gone, though, Will thought, running a hand through his hair. Damn. He stood up, and took the lead, Hannibal trailing behind him.

"Acid Pops," he said to the eagle, and they ascended the staircase. In the office, Crawford and Alana were waiting. Katz was nowhere to be seen, and neither were Zeller and Price. Hannibal shut the door behind him while Will stood near the edge of Alana's desk.

"We've reached a conclusion," Alana said, sitting down at her desk. She motioned for the men to do the same, and they all sat at various points in her office. "Will, you'll continue teaching, and the students will continue to learn. There is no point in creating an uproar within the school--parents and other schools alike will scorn us for ages to come. However, we will notify the other staff members of what is going on, as well as the prefects. I've also decided to bring in more security, subtle, of course. I will have Aurors stationed throughout the school to provide as bodyguards. If a child asks why, the story is to be that we have added more security thanks to the chagrin of parents--they won't question it. Extra Aurors will be stationed to the Ravenclaw common room, as well as the grounds."

Will took it all in. "Will they be disguised, at least?" Alana nodded.

"I do not wish for our younger students to panic. Also," she added, gesturing at Hannibal, "I'm assigning him to be your personal guard. You are the head of Ravenclaw house, I'm sure the killer will go after you at some point. He is to be with you at all hours of the day, and you'll need a cover story for him as well. None of the other professors will be receiving guards, so it will seem a bit odd."

Hannibal murmured assent, and Will nodded. To be honest, it was a lot to take in. It was sort of going in one ear and out the other.

"How about we pretend to be dating?" Hannibal offered, and it jolted Will from his stupor.

"What?" he said incredulously, looking at Hannibal.

"I'm being serious," he replied. Will could tell that he was mostly being truthful, but there was a bit of playfulness hidden in his voice. "I could be your classroom assistant in lectures, but if we go to Hogsmeade or anywhere not within the castle it would seem odd."

He had a point, a voice in Will's mind reasoned. "Still," Will said, "You're not exactly...how do I put this...my type? I'm sorry, but I don't find you interesting in *that* way."

Hannibal chuckled. "You will. Or at least, you will pretend to."

Somehow, they had reached a decision without Will's input being considered. Crawford and Alana seemed very on board with it, and Will sighed. His fate was sealed. However, he could endure it for the sake of his students.

“With that settled,” Crawford said, “It is now early morning, so I suggest Mr. Graham take Lecter where he will be staying for the duration of however long it takes to catch this sick son of a bitch. Classes will be starting soon. Thank you for your cooperation, Headmistress.” The Minister swept out of the room, most likely to return to the Ministry. Alana sighed. “All of the Astronomy classes will have to be cancelled until further notice--I’ll just say that part of the castle broke off or something along those lines.”

She motioned for them to leave her office, and they did. Will stayed silent as he glanced out of the window nearby, at the bottom of the eagle’s staircase. The horizon was ever so slightly lightened, and Will almost wanted to cry. Another all nighter, except this one was different from any other he’d ever had.

“Alright, then,” he said to Hannibal, who was pretending to study a painting down the hall. “Let’s go get ready for the day.”

Will wasn’t sure what awaited the two of them, but it was sure to get crazy.

A Slumbering Dragon Makes for a Neat Class Period

Chapter Summary

Will begins his first day as a professor with Hannibal by his side. What could go wrong?

Chapter Notes

Enjoy! I feel like I'm being swept away by this fic;; this chapter is longer than the first one so I hope you enjoy it! Kudos and comments appreciated since I need validation in my life :)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

The sun was rising over the dewy grounds of Hogwarts as Will stepped out of his tiny shower. The bathroom was steamy, and he sighed at his blurry reflection in the mirror as he brushed his hair. A flick of his wand dispersed the fog on the mirror, and he could clearly see how tired he looked. Another wave, and his hair was dry, tousled in the way only magic (or careful, not sleep-deprived hands) could do. He dressed in his casual suit quickly, having hung it over the towel rack to steam out any unfortunate wrinkles that may have occurred while sitting in his trunk. He had put away the robes he was wearing last night--honestly, he never really felt the need to wear them, as they were optional, but the night had been chilly and they were the thickest things he owned. He emerged from the bathroom to find one Hannibal Lecter, sitting in HIS armchair and reading a magnificent tome he had procured from god-knows-where. Will couldn't help but feel a tad bit irritated at the man. Of course, he was only there to help, and had been nothing but polite and cordial since they had met a few hours ago, but Will still sensed that something dark lurked inside the Auror, and it made him shudder.

"I'm done," he said to Hannibal, who nodded in response.

"I suppose I will change, since we should be making our way to the Great Hall soon."

Will glanced over at what Hannibal was reading--it was a book written about the history of Hogwarts. Of course, it made sense for the man to want to know about the school, since he would both be living in it for the time being as well as maneuvering its halls and conversing with its students. Will gestured towards the open door, and Hannibal leisurely made his way over there, producing a folded suit from a small bag tied to the belt around his Auror's robes.

As he locked the door, Will put the book back on the shelf where it belonged, placing a bookmark on the page Hannibal had left open should he want to read it again.

“I’m going to check on the Ravenclaws--come find me when you’re done.”

Hannibal didn’t respond, but Will needed to see his students, so he assumed he heard him. He pulled on his nicer shoes and put his wand through a loop in his belt, and left. The eagle knocker was waiting for him, a glint on the edge of its beak. He knocked it once, and its mouth opened to speak.

“Why does fire light, at the tip of a wand or a spark on a log?”

“It occurs by mere chance,” Will said, “whether the spark will alight or the wand will strike it into being.”

“Interesting answer,” the eagle replied. The door swung open, and he saw a few fifth years sitting around in the common room, chatting. The window was fixed, and Will realized that he had not come back to visit them early that morning as promised. He went over to the fifth-years and apologized, but they didn’t really worry about it. One of them told him to sod off, and he felt a wave of guilt wash over him. A third-year named Vannessa Jane rocketed down the stairs and ran at Will for a gripping hug, which he returned.

“What’s wrong, Vannessa?” he asked, watching as the girl softly cried into his shirt.

“It--it’s Alma. I haven’t seen her since we went to bed last night, and I don’t--where could s-she be?” she cried, and that caught both him and the fifth-years attention. Will felt even worse at her simple questioning, and a sudden pan of hate for Alana hit him.

“I’m sure she’s ok,” he lied. “Perhaps she had a family emergency and needed to leave in the middle of the night.”

Vannessa cried harder, and Will felt her tremble. Maybe that had been the wrong thing to say. “She’d tell me,” Vannessa protested, looking up into Will’s eyes. “Please, Professor, you have to believe me. W-we were best friends.” Her eyes welled up again, and before Will could try to rectify the situation, he heard someone clear his throat behind him. There Hannibal stood, an unreadable expression on his face. Vannessa looked up at him, confused.

“I think,” Hannibal began, “what Professor Graham meant to imply was not that she had abandoned you in any sort, but that she didn’t wish to worry you. I believe Miss Alma most likely didn’t want you to stress about her, thinking it was for the best.” Vannessa stared at Hannibal, and Will stood up straight while she wiped her tears. The fifth-years were now paying rapt attention to the new man, and Will figured he’d like to get introductions over with.

“Ravenclaws,” he bellowed up the stairs, “two minutes to the common room, please!”

Much noise was heard above, as students rushed to get dressed and ready for whatever Will had to tell them. Will had a connection with his students, he liked to think. He tried to help

them with any problems they had, and it seemed last night's incident didn't do much to tarnish that.

"Who's the guy?" one of the fifth-years asked, and Will turned to him.

"I'll introduce him soon," he said. "Don't worry, you're not in trouble."

The fifth year smiled, and Will smiled back. Vannessa hopped up on a chair near to Hannibal while Will walked over to the tall Lithuanian. He was dressed very simply--a soft jacket over what looked like an even softer red sweater, with plain pants and shoes.

"I assumed more Muggle-like clothes would be in order," Hannibal supplied as Will stood next to him. "I can see that the dress codes of old are less popular nowadays."

"Yeah," Will said. "Of course, the students still have to wear robes, but as they get older, they can wear more casual clothes. I don't care what they wear in the common room, but it's nice to see everyone all dressed up when it gets colder outside." Hannibal hummed assent.

"Yes, I can see the appeal. Magic clothes are always warmer in winter," Hannibal said with a smile. "Since it's nearing November, the air is chilling up quite fast. I can smell it on the horizon."

"Smell it?" Will asked, noting some of the students were beginning to file into the common room.

"I have a particularly keen sense of smell," Hannibal said, inhaling deeply to prove his point.

"For example, you use a particularly dreadful aftershave, which I would recommend changing." Before Will could berate him for that, he continued. "I can also sense that you haven't been sleeping well lately, today being no exception. Sleeplessness has a murky tang to it that's embedded in these walls. Perhaps you should give your students less work," Hannibal chided. Will tried to explain that he gave practically miniscule amounts of homework, but Hannibal cut him off with a sharp jab to the ribs. He hated this man more with every passing minute. Then, he took note that all of his students were patiently waiting in the common room, albeit a bit annoyed he was just mucking around with this random man. Will cleared his throat, and the students all looked to him.

"Everyone, I know we are a bit stirred up after last night's event. I apologize for not checking in on all of you last night, but I had urgent business to attend to. Case in point," Will said, gesturing at Hannibal. "This is my new teaching apprentice, Mr. Hannibal Lecter. He's going to be studying under me during my classes so he can get experience to eventually be a professor himself. Please be kind to him, as he is very socially inept and cannot read verbal cues. He's also a bit quiet, so don't be shy to ask him questions. We want to make him grow out of his shell, isn't that right, Mr. Lecter?" Will said, tacking on that bit at the end to get him back for the jab. Now he'd done it. Under that stone-blank face of his, Will could tell

Hannibal was seething. It was a tad scary. One of the students raised their hand, and Will pointed. “Yes, Abigail?” he said, addressing the seventh-year.

“Can we ask him a few questions now?” she said, eyes glinting. Looking around, Will noticed that everyone was eager to talk to this new, mysterious man. Will looked to Hannibal, who shook his head imperceptibly.

“Of course!” Will said, ignoring the literal hellfire Hannibal was staring into his back with. If looks could kill, Will would be dead five times over. Most of the kids in the room’s hands shot up, and Will realized that even though he wanted to mess with Hannibal, they still had to get to the Great Hall on time.

“Three questions, ok? We all have to eat breakfast.” Will said, to a few laughs. He picked on Abigail first, since she had suggested it.

“Where did you go to school?” she asked, and attention was drawn to the Auror’s blank face. Will liked to think of the Ravenclaws as kind people, but when intelligence of any kind was involved, they became a bit vicious. Any wrong answer would immediately put him on their bad side.

“I went to school at Koldovstoretz, in Russia.” he answered. “I attended more schooling after that under the wing of a renowned magician deep within the heart of the Kremlin, and finished up my studies in Lithuania, where I was born.” They seemed satisfied with that, and Hannibal called on a first year who was eagerly bouncing in the front row. His name is Issac, Will thought. To be honest, he didn’t seem like a Ravenclaw, more like a Hufflepuff to be certain. However, he was receiving great marks and had a sharp mind. It went to show that personality and appearances aren't everything.

“Yes?” Hannibal asked the small eleven-year-old, and Issac beamed.

“How tall are you?” he asked, and Will realized he wanted to know that answer himself.

“I am six foot five, if you must know,” he said with a grin. Will suddenly felt very small. He was only about five ten, and that was above average for a guy. Hannibal was over half a foot taller than him, geez. He got all of the good genetics from his family, Will surmised. Finally, Hannibal called on a fourth-year in the back.

“Why Charms?” they asked, and Hannibal nodded like it was a question he was just dying to answer. Knowing Hannibal, even for a few hours, it probably was.

“Well, I believe Professor Graham here is extremely talented and knowledgeable, and I wished to learn from, in my opinion, one of the best in the field. Charms has never been my strong suit, and I believe Professor Graham here can help me work out any kinks I have with my spell work,” he said plainly. They all stared at Will, and Will reddened. Sure, he wasn’t the worst at what he did, but Will felt the truth behind Hannibal’s words. Was he really that good?

Will shook the thought out of his head before it could develop into anything else. Shut up, Inner Will.

“I think that’s all the questions we have time for,” Will said, and the students let out a variety of dejected sighs. “No whining, you can ask him more questions later.”

The students left in large groups down to the Great Hall, and Will and Hannibal followed close behind. Not so close, however, that they could hear Hannibal cussing Will out rather dramatically.

“You absolute idiot, buffoon, stupid fucking man! Socially inept my *ass!* I’ll rip your damn arms off and shove them down your gaping, lying maw of a mouth!” This assault continued all the way down the staircase, Will laughing internally at the 180 the previously refined aura the Auror had to offer. Will knew, though, that this was a slight glimpse at the darkness he had sensed earlier, but only slight. The true darkness would come in a period of complete, terrifying calm, and Will did not want to be around for that. When they reached the Great Hall, Hannibal was a tad out of breath, but looked as well groomed as ever. Will felt a bit disappointed that Hannibal didn’t even have a single hair out of place. They walked through the back end of the Hall, entering on the side where the teachers would sit. Will took his seat, and upon realizing Hannibal didn’t have one (there were only a set number), Conjured one up for him. It was a rather nice chair, Will noted, did he do that subconsciously? Hannibal took a seat and a dining set appeared in front of him, along with all of the food already on the table. Alana had shown up before them, and leaning over to Will, said,

“I’ll be announcing the Auror’s arrival tonight--the students are always more rowdy in the morning.” Will agreed with her, although it would be a pain to introduce Hannibal to each and every one of his classes. Hannibal was already healthily tucking into the fantastic feast laid out for him, grabbing eggs, toast, and what looked like a few links of sausage. Will opted for just coffee, and Hannibal gave him a look.

“What.”

“Will, you must eat something substantial. You haven’t been sleeping, and it would be rather unfortunate if you fainted and I had to take over your classes for you.”

“Shut up. I do this all the time.”

“Must I spoon-feed you like a baby? Or are you just insistent on acting like one?”

Will gave him an incredulous look. Hannibal wasn’t looking at him, but was smiling. Will couldn’t help but chuckle.

“Ok, I get it. I’ll eat.” He was met with silence, and he sighed. Reluctantly, he added, “And, I won’t introduce you like I did earlier to anyone else, ok?”

Hannibal finally looked over at him.

“Will, I did not take it personally.” (yes, he did, Will thought.) “I understand that you’re a tad socially inept yourself, so of course you would project onto me, because you don’t know me.” (I’m glad I didn’t apologize to him, Will added on in his mind. Fuck this dude in particular.)

“Perhaps if you didn’t wear your glasses as often, using the frames as a shield, then you would be more open to new experiences.” Will practically slammed his face on the table. Seriously, did he have an off switch?

“Are you psychoanalyzing me? You won’t like me when I’m psychoanalyzed,” Will snapped back. Hannibal smiled.

“Ah, you wish for me to back off. I will, under the condition that you inform your Ravenclaws that I am *not* socially inept.”

Will was too tired for this. There could be more banter to be had, about why exactly Hannibal’s ego was so high, but he didn’t want to get into it. He just said ok and proceeded to eat a slice of plain bread with sausage to placate Hannibal. It seemed to work, considering the Auror shut up for the time being. After most of the students filed out of the Great Hall, Will stood up and reached around the top of his chair for his messenger bag, which he then noticed wasn’t there. He also noticed that his first class was due to start in a few minutes, which wasn’t enough time to run up to his office and into his classroom. He looked at Hannibal pleadingly, who had apparently figured out Will’s predicament.

“I’ll go grab it for you--it was on your desk.” Hannibal said, standing up. “I’ll find your classroom somehow.”

Will thanked him profusely, and set off to his classroom. He was a minute or two late, which made him a bit sad. He was trying to get better in the mornings, and he wanted to set a good example for the first years. They were chatting amongst themselves when he (not-so) casually walked through the door to his Charms classroom. He proceeded to head up to the lectern, and all of the first years stared at him. Eleven-year-olds were like that.

“Um.” Fuck. He had no idea what he was going to be teaching them today, it was all in his lesson plans in the BAG that the PERSON WHO DIDN’T GO TO SCHOOL HERE HAD.

“Pop quiz,” he blurted. “What did we learn about last time?” One Gryffindor boy raised his hand.

“ *Lumos* ,” the boy said. “You also assigned us an essay about it.” That earned a groan from the class. Will was infamous for forgetting about homework he assigned, so most students didn’t bother to do it.

“Ok, class, let’s calm down. I’ll ignore it this time, but I do have an announcement for you all, so please try to do your work from now on.”

As if on cue, one Hannibal Lecter walked through the door, holding Will’s messenger bag.

“Here, Will. I grabbed it from your office,” Hannibal said, a little too sultry for a professional setting. “Shame I had to go all the way up there...by myself.” Hannibal stroked a finger up

Will's arm flirtatiously, and Will almost slapped him. The kids looked on in confusion.

"Hannibal," Will whispered menacingly, "this is my first-year class."

Hannibal had the decency to look ashamed. Will coughed, and Hannibal moved a few feet away from him. "Alright gang, I apologize for that. This is my new teaching assistant, Mr. Lecter. He'll be working in the classroom with us and grading your homework, so make sure to do it when I assign it, ok?" The kids looked disappointed at the prospect of homework, but a few looked more interested in Hannibal himself.

"Professor Graham?" one Slytherin child asked. "What should we call him, Professor or Sir?"

"Mr. Lecter is fine," Hannibal replied, not unkindly. "You may refer to me as Mr. L if it's easier."

The Slytherin kid smiled. "Mr. Lecter, are you gay?"

Had Will been drinking water, he would have spat it out. Hannibal looked on with that poker face of his, but Will could sense a bit of anger from him.

"I apologize, little one, but that's a personal question." Hannibal said, and the Slytherin boy smirked.

"I know, sir, but you were being kind of blatant about it a few minutes ago," he said.

Hannibal remained silent while the class filled with whispers. Eleven-year-olds are more perceptive than he thought, Will mused, going through his bag. He was more than content to see Hannibal struggle with a small child, but it would have been downright rude to let the barrage continue.

"Alright, enough," Will said. "If you've done your homework, I'll collect it. If not, I'll expect a three-foot scroll by next class about *Lumos* and its properties." Various noises of anger and sadness crossed the class, but Will held up his hand to quiet them. "Today, we'll be covering *Reparo* , the Mending charm. It's fairly simple," he started, while setting up his projector. "I wouldn't ask you all to do this if I didn't trust in you all, but I'd like you to rip a few pages out of your Charms books." The sounds of pages ripping in silence ensued, and Will pulled up a few photos of the wand motion they were meant to be doing. "The charm *Reparo* uses a basic hand motion, like a box. I'd like you all to try it now, without saying the charm out loud." The class began to start practicing the motions, and Will pulled Hannibal off to the side. Hannibal looked a bit pouty, to be honest.

"What is wrong with you?" Will whispered, and Hannibal huffed.

"I'm sorry, Will. I only wished to establish some humiliation in you as you did to me this morning. I assumed your earlier classes had older students, who may have found it funny."

"Well, you were wrong. Don't do that again."

Hannibal grinned. “Even in private?”

“Fuck off,” Will said. “Go...organize my papers while I help out the students.”

Hannibal walks off, sitting in the small chair Will has behind his lectern. Will begins to go around, helping the students with their motions until they all started looking less like weird robots and more like students.

“Will?” Hannibal called from the front of the classroom, and Will walked up to the lectern. “By the way,” Will mentioned quietly, “can you call me Professor? I’m really sorry, but it’s more professional that way.”

Hannibal snorted. “God forbid we become friendly, like functioning adults.”

“You flirted with me in front of my class.”

“You told your Ravenclaws that I was socially inept.”

“You are. And I am a functioning adult.”

“One who doesn’t eat.”

“Can you just--” Will sighed. “What did you need?”

Hannibal pointed to a spot on Will’s schedule where he was teaching a seventh-year class. It was directly before lunch. “Would you be ok if I left early? I want to bring you lunch, seeing as how you do not eat well.”

Will gave up. “Fine, do what you want. At least let me introduce you to them.”

Hannibal nodded, smiling. “Of course.”

Will turned back to the class, which had delved into whispers and conversations alike, due to his prolonged distraction from what they were doing.

“Alright, now try speaking the charm,” Will said, turning to the class. They snapped to attention, at least most of them. A few in the back of the class weren’t paying attention, but what could he do? Hannibal procured his wand, which Will immediately stared at. It was absolutely beautiful. It was a thin ash wand, not as long as Will’s but more elegant by far. There were whorls and ridges in the wood that almost looked like they were moving, and the wand seemed extremely at home in Hannibal’s hand. This was a wand that knew its owner well, and was attuned to the finest senses of his personality. With a graceful flick of his wrist, he Conjured a small flock of blue birds silently to peck the kids in the back who weren’t paying attention. It caught the class’s attention as the birds poofed out of existence with a small tuft of feather left behind. Will coughed. It seemed like coughing was his go-to mood breaker.

“Please, pay attention,” Will said. “Go about setting your books right.” As the kids worked, Will sighed.

“Thanks for that,” he said to Hannibal, who was sorting Will’s unfinished papers from the night before. Hannibal nodded, putting his wand back into his holster. “What’s your wand core?”

“Phoenix feather. Now who’s psychoanalyzing who?” Hannibal said, smiling.

Will smiled back. Although the class had been extremely hectic, he felt a bit calmer with the Auror around. Eventually, class ended, and Will repaired any books that the students hadn’t been able to.

“Your homework is to write for me six inches on how the charm was either difficult or easy for you to conduct, and why. I’d also like you to add in your own personal theory about how the hand motion adds to the power of the charm. Please, practice, but don’t destroy anything major.”

The students slowly left, until it was only Will and Hannibal. They had a few minutes before the next class came in, and Will groaned. Hannibal reached a hand up and rubbed Will’s back.

“Perhaps I should introduce myself personally next class.”

Will nodded, rubbing his temples. He was stressed, and thanked god for the devil named Hannibal.

Classes came and went with less excitement than the first class, although Hannibal was not spared personal questions by nosy students or flirting from younger girls which was quickly deflected. Will’s personal favorite was one particular Gryffindor girl asking if Hannibal was single, to which he replied, “Yes,” and then proceeded to get barraged by girls asking him about his types. He looked pale, and very out of his comfort zone, and Will laughed internally. He was most likely more comfortable with it being adult women flirting with him, not teenage girls. Finally, when the seventh year class had rolled around, and Hannibal had left him alone, did Will feel slightly relieved. He enjoyed having the man around, you know, for jokes, but it became too much when his entire lesson was thrown off course because of all of the flirting.

He decided to let the seventh-year class do what they wanted--they were all proficient in Charms, and he trusted this specific class. He ducked out to use the staff bathroom, and upon reaching it, he heard someone else inside. It was a personal quirk of his; he only really wanted to use the bathroom when no one else was inside. However, he felt distress, and recognized it as Hannibal. He entered the bathroom slowly, not wanting to spook the Auror. At first, he thought Hannibal was crying, but he was just breathing.

“Hannibal?” Will said tentatively, and Hannibal turned around. He looked rather pale, and had undone his tie and the first two buttons on his shirt. He was sweating profusely, and Will grabbed a towel from a rack nearby the sinks. He ran it under cold water, while Hannibal just watched him. “Anxiety?” Will asked, handing him the towel, but Hannibal shook his head.

“I think I may have eaten something that didn’t agree with me. I feel rather nauseous.” Hannibal said quietly. Will could tell that he didn’t want to admit it, but he was in pain.

“I’ll take you to the nurse’s wing--”

“Don’t,” Hannibal interrupted. “I will just go up to your office. I do not wish to inconvenience anyone--this is due to my own negligence. I apologize for not being able to make you lunch, I always follow up on a promise.”

“No, I get it,” Will said. “Do you need me to come with you?”

There was no response, aside from Hannibal holding the towel to his head. Will checked his watch and saw that class would be over in a few minutes.

“I’m dismissing class early. Wait for me.”

Ignoring Hannibal’s protests, Will went back to his Charms classroom, where a few students were levitating, but nothing more had happened. He dismissed them, saying that an issue had come up and he needed to leave early. They seemed confused, but went along with it, because who doesn’t like to get out of class and go to lunch early?

Will helped Hannibal back to his office. They had an hour, so they walked slowly.

“How do you feel?” Will asked, as he unlocked his office door. Hannibal stayed quiet, face so pale it looked green. He guessed he got his answer. He led Hannibal over to his own bed (he hadn’t set up Hannibal’s yet) and sat him on the side. He was almost falling over, and looked like he was on the verge of passing out. Will began to shed Hannibal of his outer layers, hanging them over the foot of the bed. Hannibal didn’t protest as Will stripped him to just his underwear, just laid down on the bed silently. Will was comfortable enough in his own masculinity to understand that undressing a dude he just met that morning in his own bed wasn’t inherently sexual, especially because said dude had a fever. He nabbed a towel from the bathroom and soaked it in fresh, cold water, placing it on Hannibal’s forehead. What in the world could he have eaten that would have caused such distress in his body? Luckily, Will knew a few house-elves that worked in the castle (they were receiving excellent pay and benefits, more than Will was at least) and they brought some stomach-settling potions and soup for Hannibal and a sandwich for Will. Will ate the sandwich in silence as his new roommate slowly settled down into sleep, which was when Will set the potions quietly on Hannibal’s bedside and cast a charm on the soup to keep it warm for him. He tucked Hannibal in, thinking back to when he had been sick as a child and his mother comforted him

the same way. Maybe it would break the fever while he was gone, Will thought. He only had one afternoon class, and then he could stay with Hannibal until dinner.

Reluctantly, Will taught his last class of the day, which ended up being an eventful one. The whole class had heard, from other classes, that they would be meeting a "very attractive aide", to which Will replied, "He's not that handsome." (Liar.) He told them that he wasn't feeling well, and the class was disappointed. It was the truth, though, and Will couldn't help but feel worried for the man while he taught. Finally, the class was over, and Will gathered up his things and rushed back to the office, where he found Hannibal sitting up and reading a book.

"Hannibal," Will protested, "did you get up to get that?"

"No," Hannibal said, gesturing at his wand. "I figured this would be an easier solution."

Will sighed, relieved. "Did you have some of the soup the house-elves brought?"

"Yes," Hannibal said. "It was delicious. I'm feeling much better, thanks to those potions they gave me."

"What do you think caused the sickness?" Will asked, pulling up a chair next to the bed.

Hannibal closed the book, looking up at Will. His cheeks were a little rosy, and he wasn't sweating as much. "I think," he began, "I am not used to the food you provide here. I...monitor my diet closely, and as such, usually prepare my own food each meal. I have a particular butcher I go to, so I must be dependent on that meat."

Will nodded, although it didn't really make that much sense. Meat was meat, but whatever.

"I apologize for you having to see me this way," Hannibal continued. "It seems that the universe wishes for me to be out of my depth when I am around you."

Will laughed. "Do tell me, Hannibal, what do you act like when you are *in* your depth?"

"Collected," Hannibal said. "At least, more so than now. I believe you have seen me at my worst, and you've only known me for less than a day. I rarely get sick, and I'd like to think of myself as calm and analytical. Perhaps reserved is a better word."

"You certainly didn't hold anything back in the stairwell earlier," Will said, and Hannibal grinned a Cheshire-like smile.

"You are a very infuriating man, Will." Hannibal said. "Almost as infuriating as that rather rude child in your first class."

"Kids are like that," Will countered. "I don't think what you pulled this morning was in your best interests."

Hannibal coughed, scratching the back of his neck. “I have to agree with you on that. I assume I will be getting a rather long thrashing from the Headmistress tonight?”

Will didn’t answer, but nodded. They sat there for a few minutes, until an idea popped into Will’s head. “Hey, how would you feel about going for a little walk?”

Hannibal looked up at him, and Will felt the tiniest tug in his chest. “I would love that,” Hannibal said. “I have not seen much of the grounds--it was rather dark this morning.” Hannibal then moved to get out of bed, and Will unabashedly stared at the man. It would have been polite to turn away, but Hannibal’s lack of clothing made it hard to look away. He was physically fit, save for a hinting at a ‘dad bod’ around his middle. He was an attractive man, Will realized. Then, Hannibal cleared his throat, and Will had the wherewithal to look away, blushing.

“I’ll go wait in the living room,” Will said, and left the bedroom to the main office area. He slumped down in the easy chair, berating himself mentally for having the audacity to stare. After a few minutes, Hannibal emerged from the bedroom dressed in the clothes he had been wearing earlier, with an expensive-looking cloak thrown over it. Will realized that Hannibal’s clothes were most likely tailored to fit his body perfectly, unlike Will’s ‘grab anything vaguely in your size’ motto. He stood up, and put on a jacket he had hanging over one of the hangers near the door.

“Ready to go?” Will asked, and Hannibal gestured towards the door.

“Whenever you are,” he said. Will walked to the door and opened it, holding it open for Hannibal. He locked it afterwards, and they began their descent to the grounds.

“Hey,” Will said, about two floors down. “How old are you?”

“Never ask a lady her age,” Hannibal chided jokingly. “It’s improper.”

“Well, you don’t look like a lady to me,” Will responded. Hannibal smiled.

“I certainly do not.” He was quiet for a minute. “I’m fifty four.”

Will choked. “That’s--”

“Old?” Hannibal sighed. “Yes. I wished to become an Auror while I was in my prime, but my studies said otherwise. Once you learn more about the world, being an Auror loses its shine.”

Will sort of looked at him weird, and Hannibal continued. “What I mean is that it is a lackluster job. It rarely ever helps people--I spend most of my days doing paperwork. To make matters worse, most of my comrades tend to spend *their* days just waiting for someone of a slight Muggle origin to slip up so they have an excuse to use an excessive use of force.”

Will nodded, getting what Hannibal was hinting at. Violence against Muggle-borns or people with any sort of Muggle relation was common within the Wizarding world, and Will supposed Hannibal felt uncomfortable with it, just like he did.

“So why be an Auror, then?” Will said as they exited the castle. “If the system is so corrupt, why partake in it?”

“I intend to quit once this whole mess is over. I had only stayed in the system to try and...corral some of the bad ones, but there were too many. I wanted to be one of the ‘good ones’, but I was threatened most of my career there.” Hannibal was holding something back from him, Will knew it. However, the look on Hannibal’s face made Will drop it.

“Well,” Will said, “I’m forty-five, if it makes you feel better.”

Hannibal smiled at him. “Not really, but it is interesting to know. I would have assumed you were in your late thirties.”

Will smacked Hannibal’s shoulder, and they began walking down the sloping path to Molly’s cottage. Will knocked on her door a few times, but she didn’t answer. He went to knock again, but he heard a loud crash from inside the cottage, and expecting the worst, quickly opened the door. The thestral baby was flying all around the cottage, smashing into pots and pans and the occasional wall.

“Come back here,” Molly protested to the irritated thestral. Will stepped over the threshold, and the thestral stopped freaking out, for some reason. Will figured out why when Hannibal stepped into the cottage as well, dangling a fine cut of meat in the thestral’s direction. Wait, where had he gotten that from? The thestral made its way over to Hannibal, who pet its dark head while it snapped up the meat eagerly. It was easily the size of a Great Dane, and Will looked incredulously over at Molly, who was busy fixing what the thestral had broken within her small cottage.

“Molly, what the hell?” Will said, and Molly turned. “Why is it so big?”

Molly took a good look at the large beast, who was nuzzling Hannibal’s hand as he petted it. “I think it just needed some rest--thestrals have odd growth spurts.” She paused. “And who’s your friend, there? The thestral seems to have taken an odd liking to him.”

They both looked at Hannibal, who looked up back at them and smiled.

“He’s beautiful,” Hannibal said. “He’s elegant, and yet wild. Truly a magnificent creature, a thestral, you said?”

Molly nodded, looking to Will for support. “Oh,” Will said, “This is my new teaching assistant, Hannibal Lecter.”

“You should tell her the truth, Will,” Hannibal mumbled from where he was crouched over, practically coddling the thestral at that point. It really had taken a liking to him.

“What ‘truth’, Will?” Molly said, hands on her hips. She was a fiery woman when provoked, and Will felt himself shrink a little under her strong gaze.

“I’ll spare you the details, but he’s an undercover Auror as my security detail.” She still looked confused, and he sighed, pulling out a chair for her to sit down in. She did, and he told her everything. By the time he was done, she had tears in her eyes.

“Will, you need to leave! If he’s going after you…”

“He’s also after my students. Molly, I can’t leave them.”

She sat there, in shock. Hannibal walked over to her, thestral trailing close behind. He patted her shoulder gently, and she looked up.

“Do not worry, Molly. Will is capable of defending himself, and I am only here to make sure he does not cause more trouble than he usually does.” With that, Hannibal smiled, and she smiled back.

“Yes,” she agreed, “he is a troublemaker. Ran in here late last night with that thestral in his arms and I wondered where Headmistress found this odd man.”

Hannibal laughed at that, and Will could sense something cold in its undertones. Molly continued. “You should be getting back to the castle, now. Dinner is going to be served shortly, if the sky’s anything to go off of.”

The sky was darkening by the minute, and Will agreed. The thestral was extremely calm now, and when they left, it whined for Hannibal, and Hannibal presented it with a glove he pulled out of the small bag he hung from his belt. It sniffed and snorted all over it, seemingly content with something of Hannibal’s. The walk up was quiet, until Hannibal broke the silence.

“You are confused about the thestral.” It was a statement, not a question.

“Yes,” Will replied simply.

“They are attracted by humans who have seen great terrors in their lives. Tell me, Will. What have you seen to be able to glimpse that frightening creature?” asked Hannibal, his voice deep and clear.

They stopped on their walk, the sky the color of a deep sea.

“I should be asking you that, Hannibal,” Will said quietly, turning to face the man walking beside him. He didn’t receive an answer.

Hannibal stood there, barely moving. The rise and fall of his chest was the only thing that made him look slightly alive. He looked to the sky, and when his eyes fell on Will, Will’s

throat closed up. Hannibal's eyes had a sinister glint in them, one Will had never seen. His eyes shone in the bare moonlight, and suddenly, Will saw Hannibal not as a man, but as a thestral-like beast that towered above him, with thick antlers and pitch black skin. Then, Hannibal had returned, the same look in his eye. Will felt a tug in his gut as Hannibal said,

"We all have skeletons in our closets, Will. I'm afraid mine are a bit more...dangerous than most."

With that, he walked away, leaving Will dumbfounded on the rocky hill. Somehow, he knew that had he been on Hannibal's bad side, he would have been left dead on the ledge he was currently standing on. It felt like Will's entire body had been ran along the edge of an extremely sharp scalpel, on fire and tingling.

And he wanted more.

Chapter End Notes

Sorry for the cliffhanger, but this chapter was 12 pages long on docs and too much for me to handle;; also FYI: hannibal was feeling sick bc he's used to only eating human meat, which has different chemical balances in it and affects the body in different ways. he wasn't used to eating actual pig as opposed to lean pig, so it messed up his stomach a little

Doves Over Dinner

Chapter Summary

A second body is discovered, and Will comes to a realization of some truths about himself. Hannibal feasts.

Chapter Notes

hey gang! sorry for a bit more of a wait with this one;;; I'm very proud of this chapter! I hope you all enjoy it, kudos and comments appreciated! Content warning for canon-typical violence and cannibalism :) also super big thank you to one of my close friends for beta-ing this chapter, i really appreciate it!!!

They reached the Great Hall just as students began to file in through its large doors. Once Will had taken a seat, he realized that many points and stares were being directed at him and his ‘assistant’. Apparently word had been spread from the first years about Hannibal’s proclivities. Will leaned over to Hannibal, who was nonchalantly rearranging his silverware.

“Hey, don’t let them get to you,” Will said. “Drama here runs its course and then leaves.”

Hannibal smiled dryly. “I’m sure it does.” His smile warmed as he looked over at Will. “Don’t worry, I do not mind.”

Will didn’t smile back, the gleam of Hannibal’s teeth reminding him of their conversation outside. Will realized he wasn’t worried, just mildly intrigued. What sort of things could this man be hiding? Was Hannibal threatening him on purpose, baiting him like a fish on a hook?

The Great Hall fell silent as the Headmistress entered through the back doors of the Hall. She walked to the large lectern in front of the teacher’s table, commanding silence from the room. A few stragglers rushed in and sat down, and once everyone had made themselves comfortable, she began.

“Tonight, I wish to speak with all of you about a matter of grave importance. As most of you may have noticed, the presence of Aurors within our school has increased. I had hoped I wouldn’t have to tell all of you this,” she paused. Hannibal looked over at Will, confused. Will was right there with him--Alana had said she wasn’t going to tell the students about what was going on.

“I regret to inform all of you that a student was killed early this morning on the Astronomy tower. Her name was Alma Roberts. This is why Astronomy classes have been cancelled until further notice, and why you will see Aurors more often in the halls of our school.”

It was dead silent in the Great Hall. In all his years at Hogwarts, he had never seen it so quiet. It left him unsettled, like something crucial was missing. Hogwarts was supposed to be safe, but now, no one knew. Will wasn’t sure how to feel about Alana telling the students the truth. Angry, maybe? He just felt numb. Alana continued.

“Now, I do not wish to incite a panic. I only wanted to inform you all of the circumstances surrounding us, and make sure that you all know you’re safe.”

The door to the Great Hall near the Slytherin table bust open, the frozen atmosphere broken. Will recognized the Auror who had ran through the door--it was the other one who was in Alana’s office this morning.

“Beverly,” Hannibal murmured to himself, “what have you gotten into?”

Before Will could ask, Beverly ran up to Alana amid the slight chaos, and whispered something into her ear. Alana’s face froze, and then they both looked over to stare at Will. He could feel Hannibal looking at him too, and somehow he knew.

“Where’s the body?” he asked Beverly. He didn’t mean to be loud but he saw Chilton choke on his wine halfway down the table. Beverly gestured for him to follow her, and he did so quickly, Hannibal dragging himself leisurely behind. Once they were out of the Hall, Will let out a breath he didn’t know he was holding.

“It’s here, out on the grounds. It’s another Ravenclaw, but that’s the only ID we’ve got.

Will’s heart sank. The body was practically on the castle’s doorstep, halfway down the stairs. Blood ran in rivulets down the stones, pooling at the bottom. The body looked haphazardly thrown across the steps. Zeller and Price were already there (Will was surprised at how fast they worked) although they appeared to just be getting started. Price took his attention away from the body to let Will get through the conjured tape. Will had no idea who this was--his face was missing.

“Looks like a teenager, judging from the size of the body,” Zeller mentioned offhandedly. Will racked his brain for anyone who he had noticed missing from the table, but he hadn’t even bothered to count the Ravenclaws tonight. He had been too focused on Hannibal.

“Damn it,” Will said, his hands tightening into fists. “Safe. Right.”

This body was different, Will thought. More angry. Whoever did this knew the basic schedules of the students, although that information could be easily gleaned from some basic observation. The murderer *chose* to kill him while Alana was giving her speech, Will realized.

“He’s angry that we didn’t do anything,” Will said to no one in particular. “He’s frustrated because we waited to inform the students, let them carry on with their lives.”

“He had hoped to see the school shrouded by fear,” Hannibal said. “He wants you to be scared.”

Will stayed silent, staring into the gaping crater that was once a student’s face.

“Muggle weapons?” he asked, and Zeller nodded, poking the hole with his wand.

“This probably was a shotgun,” Price said. “It’s a type of gun that could produce this kind of damage. It’s really loud, though.”

“Maybe the body was dragged?” Zeller supplied as Beverly moved forward to lift up the body. There were streaks of dirt on the backside of the boy’s robes, and Beverly nodded.

“I bet he dumped it in between shifts,” she said. “The Auror who was out here before me said he didn’t see anything, but he was here when I came out.”

“How long was the shift change?” Will asked.

“A few minutes, tops.”

Will hummed. For some reason, he couldn’t stop looking into the hole where the student’s face had been. It gleamed with wet pieces of bone fragments and grey matter, the blood drying up around the edges of the wound. The student had died recently, under his care, and yet he felt nothing.

“Well, if you can’t tell us who he is…” Zeller started, looking at Will.

“Let us go back in, Will,” Hannibal said, and Will nodded. There was no more he could do, and Beverly patted his shoulder as Hannibal led him back inside. Will glanced back at the body, watching as Beverly conjured a sheet to give the body a bit of respect. They entered the room in front of the Hall, empty save for the two of them. “Are you sure you’re alright?” Hannibal asked, looking Will in the eyes. Will glanced away, choosing to focus on a spot on the floor rather than the other man’s face.

“I’m not sure.”

“Not fond of eye contact?” Hannibal asked, and Will scoffed.

“Eyes are distracting,” Will said, but Hannibal grabbed his shoulder.

“Look at me, Will,” Hannibal said. Reluctantly, Will looked at Hannibal, but all he could see were the dead eyes of the girl who died just this morning. He blinked, and all he saw was concern for a new friend in Hannibal’s eyes. It was soothing, to an extent.

“Two bodies in a day,” Will said, and Hannibal smiled.

“A record. May I?” he said, and Will assumed he was talking about his glasses, which had slid down his nose a little. Hannibal tentatively rearranged them on Will’s face, and backed off just as gently. “Thick frames indicate you wish to hide your face,” Hannibal said.

“Who wouldn’t, with all that’s been going on.” Will said.

“You do not have to hide from me, Will,” Hannibal said, and led them back to the hall.

Will opened the door to a loud clamor. Voices directed at him came from every direction, and he couldn’t help but want to shrink into himself even more. Hannibal placed himself in front of Will, just a little, and it helped. A small body rushed up to Will, and looking down, it was the same Ravenclaw girl who he had tried to console that morning.

“It was Alma?” she asked, thick tears pouring down her face. “She’s the one that--that died this morning?”

Will nodded, and the girl bawled. Will crouched down and pulled her into a hug, and she cried on his shirt for the second time that day. She eventually was pulled away by an older Ravenclaw, who shot Will with a look of disdain like it was his fault. He couldn’t possibly tell them another one of their own had died, not in the wake of the sadness and fear filling the castle. Alana beckoned them to the front of the Hall, where the rest of the teachers were waiting. Professor Chilton, the Defense Against the Dark Arts teacher, impatiently tapped his foot while Will and

Hannibal stood next to him.

“Why don’t we just get rid of Will,” Chilton suggested coolly. Alana shot him a look, and he quieted.

“I think it would be in everyone’s best interests to sleep in here tonight,” Alana said. “That way we can prevent another casualty for today.”

“How many does that make now?” asked Professor Du Maurier, head of Slytherin House and the Divination teacher.

“Two, in less than twenty-four hours,” Alana supplied. “This man is a monster, and we must do what we can to protect the students we have left. We can’t let this continue.”

“I agree,” Hannibal said. “The school must be protected.”

The rest of the professors murmured various assents, so Will assumed Alana had filled them in on his and Hannibal’s situation.

“We will clear out the hall and conjure sleeping bags,” Alana said to the teachers. “It will be easier to protect the students when they are in one place.”

“We should take shifts to go around the castle,” another professor suggested. “In order to make sure he’s not hiding in any little nook or cranny.”

“We will figure that out when we get to it,” Alana said. “It’s a good idea though. Now, let’s get moving. Each Head of House is going to lead their respective students to their dorm so that they can get ready for bed and grab any homework they may need to do. The rest of us will work on transforming the Hall into a suitable place to sleep. Go now,” she said, and they did. Hannibal and Will rounded up the Ravenclaws, though they hardly paid Will any

attention. Will ceded, and let Hannibal lead the Ravenclaws. It was chaotic, to say the least. The students were worried, Will was stressed, and Hannibal looked stretched thin. Will and Hannibal stood to the side of the common room as the sounds of trunks thudding and feet stomping resounded from upstairs.

“I apologize for taking your students away from you,” Hannibal said, a bit bashfully. Will brushed it off. He understood why they were so mad at him--two of their own were dead, and he neglected to tell them.

“It’s fine, Hannibal. I should have told them this morning, but I didn’t want to ruin their day.”

“I think more than just their days have been ruined,” Hannibal said. “Has Alana notified the parents of the students?”

“I’m sure of it,” Will said. “It would be disrespectful not to allow the parents to grieve.”

“Do you think parents are going to want to take their kids out of school?”

“Well, obviously, although we can try our best to make them stay. What this man wants is to destroy us, both physically and mentally. Leaving, having to shut down the school, ex cetera, would be to give him what he wants.”

Hannibal hummed, running a hand through his hair. “Will that not serve as an excuse for him to get angrier at these students?”

Will nodded, agreeing. Tonight’s murder had only served to prove that point. The real question was how in the world this man was able to slip past their defenses, twice. However, now wasn’t the time for speculation. That could come later. Now, they needed to worry about the safety of their students. Once everyone was dressed for bed, and the few cat familiars that roamed the place fed and watered, Will blew out the lamps and Hannibal led everyone back down to the Great Hall. It had been transformed, a few hundred black sleeping bags laid out on the floor. Everyone else had already arrived--Ravenclaw tower was the farthest dormitory away. An area in the back corner had been left open for them, and the Ravenclaws rushed to get settled. Will went over to check on them, but save for the few who actually responded, everyone else ignored him and pretended they were asleep or were in the middle of a conversation. Petty, Will thought, but understandable. He wished his students trusted him like they did a few hours ago, but he didn’t know if that would be possible again. They had no idea who this man even was, and yet, he had inserted himself into their lives like a plague.

Will walked over to where Hannibal was leaning against the wall, and stood there with him. The students were mostly quiet, amid whispers. Will could hear the Gryffindors talking about who would die next. It angered him, that their fellow classmate’s lives were nothing to them. Hannibal tapped his arm, and he realized he was openly glaring at the students, who had noticed.

“I...I’m sorry,” Will said quietly, only to Hannibal.

“Never be sorry,” Hannibal said in return. “You have every right to be upset. However, *you* are a prime suspect right now.”

Will knew. He was from a Muggle family, and hadn't been in the castle when the first girl was murdered. He had an alibi for the second murder, but still.

"The quiet teacher finally snaps, huh," Will said, with a light chuckle. Hannibal gave him a look Will couldn't clearly interpret, but something akin to praise was there.

"It wouldn't be surprising," Hannibal murmured. "There is a sort of darkness in you that I have the...luxury of being able to witness."

"I wouldn't call trauma a luxury," Will said. "Are you referring to the thestral?"

"Yes," Hannibal said. "I feel as though this other side of you may not just be trauma, but something akin to a destructive force."

"Now, I'm confused, Hannibal. This whole time I was under the assumption that you were suspicious of me because of my being able to see the thestral, but what is this...destructive force you're talking about?"

"Thestrals can be seen by someone who has accepted a death in their life. Someone who has seen death, and understands its inevitability. This is common. I am referring to the look on your face when you saw the second body."

Will swallowed, a cold sweat breaking out over his upper lip.

"And what would that look be?"

"Apathy."

Will stayed silent as he turned his head to look at Hannibal. What he saw shocked him. Hannibal looked like a child who was given a hundred chocolate bars, pleased and happy and overwhelmed all at once.

"You looked at that body and you felt *nothing* ," Hannibal whispered. He loomed above Will like an oppressive force, a whirling gale, a snake pit he had no chance of getting out of. "Tell me, Will, how does one accustom themselves to seeing a body so quickly?"

"Experience," Will replied, feeling a coiling in his gut. Somehow, the sheer bloodlust this man exuded excited him, and it was only then he came to a realization.

"Hannibal, what secrets are you hiding that a messenger of death wishes you were its master?"

All of a sudden, it was gone. The energy Hannibal let off seeped back into him, and Will could have sworn Hannibal looked almost disappointed. He realized that may have been the wrong thing to say. Or, would a sane person have done the same thing? Why did he ache to feel that power again?

"Will, there are a few things about me I wish to keep for myself," Hannibal replied. "That is why they are called secrets. However, you are like an open book, and I myself can't wait to read your pages further."

Will shivered.

A quiet shout broke the tension--some Hufflepuffs were playing Exploding Snap.

Suddenly, he felt the need to escape while he still could. “I’ll be right back,” Will said to Hannibal, and carefully made his way around the bags over to Alana, who was talking to Professor Verger, the head of Gryffindor house and the Transfiguration teacher. “Excuse me, ladies,” Will interrupted, and they both looked at him. “I was wondering if Hannibal and I could go to the kitchen to get some food for the students? I assume most of them didn’t eat.” An excuse, really. Will wanted to be anywhere than in a room with nothing to do with the man over on the wall.

Alana nodded, considering the thought. “Just tell the house-elves to bring some sandwiches and such here, and make sure to tip them well because I think they’re technically off the clock,” and proceeded to hand him a rather large satchel of Galleons.

Will nodded, and gestured to Hannibal, who looked at him confusedly.

“I’m going to the kitchen to get food for the students.”

Hannibal had to follow him, as his bodyguard, but Will wished he could have just gone by himself. Stupid idiot, he thought to himself. Not only did he almost expose himself to a near stranger, but he had let himself get dragged in by the man’s enchanting way of speaking. It was almost like he was under a spell, Will reasoned, taking out his wand to light the way. They were silent on their trip to the kitchen, but Will could sense Hannibal’s amusement behind him. It seemed like, thanks to this new body, Hannibal’s attitude had done a 180, from gentle to vicious. The man who he met early that morning was not the man watching his back right now, Will thought. They reached the painting that the kitchens hid behind, and Will tickled the pear, revealing the handle.

“You’ve got to be kidding,” Hannibal chided at the pear. “A pear?”

“Don’t question the founders,” Will said offhandedly. The kitchen was immense, and dark, save for a lit fireplace with a couch in front of it.

“Excuse me, sir!” A small voice sounded from below Will, and he looked down to see a well-dressed house elf standing in front of him. “I am supposed to inform you that we’re technically off the clock--”

Will handed the house elf the satchel, which was almost the size of him. The elf opened it to heaping piles of Galleons, and he broke out into a large grin.

“Oh, thank you, sir! Of course, we would have been happy to help you anyways, but thank you! We won’t waste this!”

Will smiled. The happiness coming from the elf felt infectious. The elf whistled, and about twenty other elves emerged from a back room, all in little suits.

“Cute,” Will heard Hannibal mutter from behind him.

“I didn’t peg you as the caring type,” Will said jokingly to Hannibal, who smiled in return.

“Magical creatures fascinate me more than most things.”

Will felt a bump at his elbow, and looked down to see an elf holding up a cup of tea for him. Will thanked the elf profusely, and upon tasting it, found it was an excellent cup of tea, done just how he liked. Hannibal had one too, and let out an appreciative hum. The connection between the two of them was so different from earlier, Will noted. It was almost like their conversation hadn’t happened.

“What do you need from us, sir?” the house-elf from earlier asked. Will had almost forgotten why they were here.

“We’re having a sort of...situation,” Will said vaguely. “I need a decent amount of sandwiches and finger foods sent to the Hall. The students didn’t get to eat dinner tonight, and we had to put away the tables. They’re all in the Hall, though.”

“We will send up baskets, sir!” one elf squeaked, and the rest chimed in. The kitchen was bustling, and Will smiled at how happily they went about their work. Will sat down on the couch in front of the fire, and an elf brought him a plate of tea cookies and a blanket, and before Will could thank them, they had left. He nibbled on a cookie as he heard Hannibal ask the elves how the food transport system worked. Before he could make fun of Hannibal for being a bit of a nerd at heart, he felt a wave of tiredness wash over him. Sitting down and just...stopping for a minute meant all of the stress from the past day caught up to him. That elf was a blessing, Will thought, as he sunk into the very comfortable couch, pulling the blanket over him. Before long, he was passed out.

Hannibal watched as Will peacefully slept on the couch. It would be safe to leave him here, Hannibal thought. The house elves would make sure he slept well and got up in time to get ready for breakfast. As the elves prepared the baskets, he tapped one passing by on the shoulder.

“Is there anything I can get for you, sir?” asked the house-elf, balancing small pots of jams on one shoulder and biscuits on the other. It seemed like they were preparing breakfast foods in some baskets as well.

“If you wouldn’t mind, I have a question for you once you’ve put those away,” he said with a smile.

That morning’s fiasco with the sausage was something Hannibal would rather not relive. He grabbed it without thinking, more focused on Will’s wellbeing than his own. Of course pork would make him sick. The elf returned to Hannibal, and stood there patiently as Hannibal tried to figure out how to ask this subtly.

“Do you...can I ask you this in confidentiality?” he asked, and the elf shuffled their feet.

“Anything you ask is confidential,” the elf said. “We can’t tell anyone private requests--Headmistress forbode it.”

So Alana has some secrets with these elves she doesn’t want anyone knowing, Hannibal mused. Interesting--it probably has to do with that Verger woman.

“Would it be possible for me to use your kitchen now and then? I have a very...strict diet.”

The elf nodded, albeit confused. “We can provide for every diet type, however, we understand.”

“Great,” Hannibal said with a small smile. “I have one more request for you.”

The elf stayed silent while he made his request, and the elf saluted him and disappeared with a small crack. Will’s snoring hitched, but continued. Hannibal was glad he was a deep sleeper. It would make this easier.

The elf returned with a bound and tied Muggle, who appeared to be very asleep.

“I used a bit of magic on him,” the elf said. “You said you didn’t want him awake.”

Hannibal nodded, a tad wary that the elf did it without concern. He thanked the elf. “Would you mind if I used your kitchen now?”

The elf gestured for him to use it, and he thanked the elf again. This wasn’t his usual M.O, but he needed to store up for a little bit. The Muggles knew him as Il Mostro-- the monster of Florence. He mainly hunted in Florence, but he guessed this Muggle was from somewhere nearby Hogwarts. He hung up his suit vest on a coat hook he conjured, and rolled up his white sleeves.

He cleanly slit the Muggle’s throat above the sink, levitating him with a simple spell. He removed the ropes and clothes off the body, placing it on a rather large cutting board. He got to work dismembering the different parts of the body while the elves went about their work. Hannibal sighed, wiping his forehead. It never got easier.

All organs harvested and put in the fridge (labelled), he informed the elves that they weren’t to touch those, and they obeyed. He cut up the limbs, segmenting them, and Transfigured them to look more like pork and beef cuts than human. He told the elves not to touch them too. It was such a shame he had gotten to that girl’s body when he did. The organs were pristine, but a little too old for his taste. Meat had to be harvested right after death, and that girl had been dead for a while.

He cooked the Muggle’s flank that night, a steak enough to sate his appetite. He ate it quietly, savoring each bite. The sausage he had the unpleasant chance of eating that morning tasted quite fake. The real thing was always better.

After cleaning up what he needed to, and reminding the elves one final time about what they were not to touch, he left the kitchen with one final glance back at Will, who was sleeping like a baby.

It was time to explore the castle.

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